



OUR TOWN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

MARCH 2014



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Light as
Cosmic Time
Machine



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Colorful
Cuba



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Wise
Owls



10

Hour
of Code



CRIME BY THE NUMBERS:

(Number of occurrences in Los Altos Hills by year)

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

2010: 14
2011: 26
2012: 14
2013: 40

IDENTITY THEFT FORGERY/FRAUD

2010: 36
2011: 22
2012: 24

AUTO BURGLARY

2010: 2
2011: 4
2012: 2

AUTO THEFT

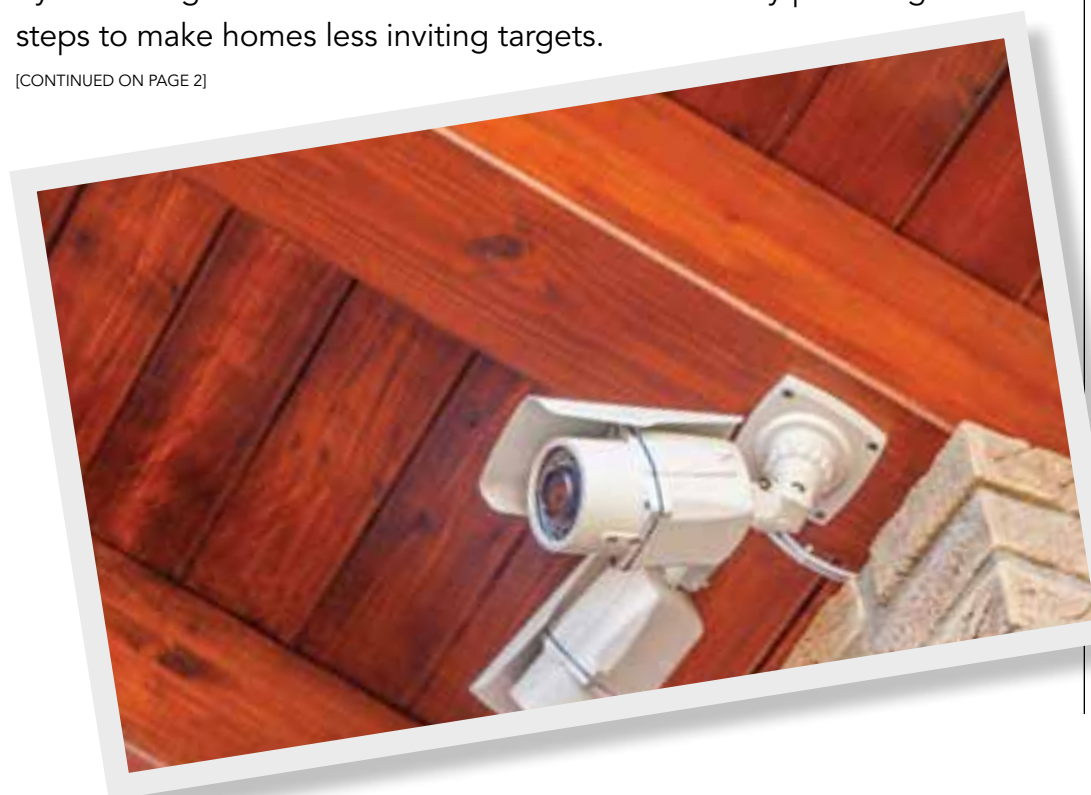
2010: 2
2011: 4
2012: 2



Preventing Crimes of Opportunity

The United States is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, home to affluent cities like Los Altos Hills, Atherton, and Hillsborough that are consistently ranked in the top ten of the wealthiest cities (based on average household income). Although that distinction fosters a certain sense of pride, it also means that residents have more to lose if someone breaks in. Los Altos Hills is a very safe town, as evidenced by few offenses against persons, but property crimes are a little more common. Law enforcement experts know that most property crimes, such as burglaries, are "crimes of opportunity." The sheriff's office, with the help of town residents, is working to reduce these crimes of opportunity by educating residents about criminal behavior and by providing basic steps to make homes less inviting targets.

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Increase in Home Burglaries

In 2013, burglaries were on the rise across the Bay Area, and Los Altos Hills was no exception. After averaging just under 22 residential burglaries per year for the past eight years, Los Altos Hills experienced 40 residential burglaries last year. Although the burglary rate is still well below state and national burglary rates per capita, it's not much comfort to those who have been victimized.

In general, most of these residential burglaries are being committed by a small group of burglars. In 2013, the sheriff's office was able to make a number of arrests associated with 17 of these cases. Investigators have traced criminals working out of San Francisco, Oakland, Daly City, and San Jose.

Preventing Home Burglaries

Burglars like the path of least resistance and they don't want to get caught, so the goal is to make it difficult for burglars to break in, and to draw attention to them if they do. In simplest terms, this can be done by locking up your house and setting an alarm. Additional burglary prevention tips appear below.

The Modus Operandi

Most burglars drive through neighborhoods looking for homes that appear vacant and that seem easy to get into

without being caught. When burglars see a potential target house, they will often knock on the front door to see if there's an answer. If no one is home, they will then walk the perimeter of the house, checking for unlocked windows or doors. Burglars enter through an unlocked window or door 65% of the time. Once inside, they spend less than 10 minutes looking for valuables, particularly small items with high value (jewelry, laptops, smart phones, designer bags, etc.). Burglars can also take financial items for identity theft (checkbooks, credit cards, statements, or ID cards). They often use pillow cases to carry away stolen goods. An accomplice may be waiting in the getaway car down the street or around the corner. Often the burglars will call their accomplice to pick them up from a house when they have finished collecting valuables.

After a Break In

If you come home and see that someone has burglarized your house, step outside and call 911 immediately. The sheriff's office will respond and check your house to make sure no one is still inside and inspect the home to try to determine the ingress and egress points. Since the sheriff's office is a full service police agency, deputies will dust for fingerprints. The deputy will take a statement

from the resident to determine the timeframe of the burglary, a preliminary list of missing items, and obtain any photos or serial numbers. Serial numbers will be entered into a California stolen property database to help in the recovery of those items.

Neighborhood Watch Programs

One of the oldest and most effective crime prevention tools is establishing a Neighborhood Watch group. The primary purpose of this program is to promote awareness and to aid in prevention. The program, in tandem with Nextdoor (nextdoor.com is a social network for neighborhoods), leverages the familiarity and knowledge neighbors have about their community. When an incident takes place, residents are notified and can be vigilant for further unusual activity. This increased communication can sometimes cause residents to believe there's an epidemic of crime, when in actuality they're merely becoming more aware that crime does occur. The hope is that residents will not panic, but rather become more astute about the activity in their neighborhood so that they can call in any and all suspicious behavior and prevent potential crimes.

Information about setting up a Neighborhood Watch program can be found at the National Neighborhood Watch Institute's website at www.nnwi.org. The sheriff's office also meets with Neighborhood Watch groups to support the group and to provide safety tips residents can put into practice. Signage can be put in place to put burglars on notice that residents are looking out for suspicious behavior and reporting it to the police.

Crime Prevention Forum

One of the ways that the sheriff's office seeks to educate residents is by holding an annual Crime Prevention Forum in conjunction with the Town of Los Altos Hills. This year's forum will be held at Town Hall on April 9, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Captain Ken Binder is the West Valley Division Commander for the sheriff's office, which serves Los Altos Hills and the surrounding unincorporated areas.

HOME BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS:

- 1. Take Inventory:** As soon as you purchase valuables, record their serial numbers. Take photos of all your valuables, and take photos or a video of every room, showing all your property. Keep this list and photos in a safe place; they will be helpful for recovery and insurance purposes.
- 2. Secure Doors and Windows:** Dead bolts will help fortify your front door; also be sure to close and lock ALL windows — even on a second story. Do not leave a window open, even just a few inches, to allow for fresh air. Keep gates, located at the side of house or in front of a driveway, closed and locked.
- 3. Home Security System:** Consider installing a home security system that includes an audible alarm and surveillance cameras. Alarms will not serve their purpose if they are not turned on; get into the practice of setting the alarm when you leave the house. (Be mindful of false alarms that require deputies to respond; a third false alarm will trigger a fine from the town.)
- 4. Motion Sensor Lights:** Consider installing motion sensor lights on the outside of your home. Also consider placing at least two indoor lights on timers during extended absences; this will give the illusion to burglars that someone is home.
- 5. Deliveries:** Stop deliveries including mail, newspaper, and packages during vacations. These are obvious signals to burglars that no one is home. Ask a neighbor to collect them in your absence. Have internet purchases delivered to a neighbor or friend.
- 6. Report:** Call 911 or 408-299-2311 (non-emergency) regarding all suspicious behavior. Residents have the best familiarity with what is normal behavior and activity for their neighborhood. Don't hesitate to report any and all suspicious behavior.
- 7. Unexpected Knocks at Door:** Burglars will sometimes knock on the front door to see if anyone is home before breaking in. Always let them know someone is home by answering through the door, although it is not necessary to open the door. Note that the town requires a permit for solicitors, so be sure to call the sheriff's office so we can make contact with the solicitors to check for a permit. If a solicitor or person at the door is persistent, let them know that you called 911. If possible, take note of the person's physical attributes (age, height, hair color, race, clothing) and vehicle (make, model, color, decals, especially license plate number).



TO LEARN MORE:

Contact the sheriff's office at (408) 868-6600. To view current crime trends in LAH, visit www.crimereports.com



Light

as a COSMIC Time Machine

The universe tells us its story mainly through the light we receive. But the waves of light do not arrive instantaneously. Although they travel at the fastest speed possible in nature (an astounding 186,000 miles every second) they still take a while to get here. The universe is big, so the news is delayed by the vast gulf of space it has to cross to reach us.

The closest object to us is the Moon. Its average distance is about 240,000 miles, so light from the Moon takes 1.3 seconds to get from the Moon to Earth. When astronauts landed on the Moon in the 1960s and 70s, viewers noticed that they seemed slow to answer questions transmitted from Earth. That was because it took 1.3 seconds for the question to travel to the Moon, and another 1.3 seconds for the answer to get back to Earth.

The Sun is 93 million miles away, so sunlight takes 8 and 1/3 minutes to get to us. Not much changes about the Sun in so short a time, but it still means that when you look at the Sun, you see it as it was more than 8 minutes ago.

The giant planet Jupiter is more than five times farther from the Sun than the Earth. We see a planet like Jupiter because it reflects the light of the Sun—which takes about 43 minutes to reach Jupiter. The return trip to the Earth can take from 35 to 52 minutes, depending

Above: Earth as seen from the Moon by the orbiting Cayuga spacecraft in 2007. Below: Jupiter as photographed from the Cassini mission in December 2000. Eleven Earths would fit side by side into the widest part of Jupiter's globe.

on whether we are on the same side of the Sun as Jupiter or on the other side.

When we move beyond our neighborhood in space, our scale of distances and travel times needs to change. Now light will require years, not hours, to make its way to us. The closest star is called Alpha Centauri, and its light takes more than 4 years to reach the Sun. (Astronomers use a special term for this way of measuring distance—they say the star is 4 light years away.)

The brightest star in our skies is the “dog star,” Sirius, which is roughly 9 light years away. Think of what you were doing 9 years ago. That’s when the light we see from Sirius tonight

first began its journey to us. Not far from Sirius in the sky is the bright star Betelgeuse (pronounced “Beetle juice”). It is so far that light takes roughly 600 years to reach us. Light that we see tonight from Betelgeuse left it in the middle ages.

The farther away an object in space lies, the longer it takes its light to get to us and the older that light is when it reaches Earth. As we look deeper and deeper into space, we are looking deeper into the past. Light is like a time machine, filling us in on the history of the universe.

GUEST SCIENCE WRITER



Andrew Fraknoi is Chair of the Astronomy Department at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, where he teaches day and evening introductory classes in astronomy and physics

“for poets.” In 2007, he was named Professor of the Year for California by the Carnegie Endowment for Higher Education. He appears regularly on Bay Area and national radio programs, explaining astronomical developments in everyday language. Asteroid 4859 was named Asteroid Fraknoi by the International Astronomical Union in recognition of his contributions to the public understanding of science. To learn more about Fraknoi’s classes visit: www.foothill.edu/ast

Photos: (top) courtesy of Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency. Bottom: NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory



Domestic dogs evolved from wolves and have lived and worked with man for more than 15,000 years. About 6,000 years ago, man began breeding dogs for specific abilities, traits, sizes, and appearances — and many of those breeds are still with us today. As of 2013, the World Canine Organization recognizes 339 breeds of dogs. In the United States, there are about 42.5 million homes that own one or more dogs; experts estimate that there are more than 73 million pet dogs. Even though most dogs are bred for companionship — sharing emotions, needs, and routines with their owners — they are not people. Each dog has its own intelligence, personality, and trainability.

Training Dog's Best Friend

Rosalie Alvarez has been teaching dog-training courses (or more accurately, training people to train their dogs) for more than 50 years. She was born and raised in Yuka, California, where her father had a ranch with lots of animals: dogs, cats, cows, horses, chickens, ducks, and geese. Not having other kids to play with, she began training dogs, cats, and chickens to entertain the ranch workers. Many years later, a friend sold Alvarez her first real pet, a Doberman Pinscher named AKC Doberman Pinscher Specialty (“Specialty”) for \$50. At the time, Alvarez had a busy schedule — she was living in Los Altos Hills raising three children. But she realized she loved working with dogs and made time to become an AKC trainer. Alvarez trained Specialty and entered her in an AKC competition; the dog received a perfect score. From there she went on to train a drill team of 16 Dobermans that performed staged shows in the U.S. and Canada. Alvarez and her dogs also appeared



Rosalie Alvarez (left) coaches a student and her pet through a dog obstacle course.

in city parades (Los Altos, Redwood City, San Jose, San Francisco, and Calgary, Canada).

Training Dog Owners

Based on her decades of experience, Alvarez believes that all dogs are teachable, but some dogs are more challenging than others.

“The most difficult thing about dog-training classes,” says Alvarez, “is teaching people to teach their pets properly. Most dog owners mistakenly believe that dogs understand English sentences. Dogs simply don’t understand sentences; they understand a single word, a command, that is coupled with an action.” A dog owner must repeat a command until the dog learns it; it always takes a lot of repetitions, so a pet owner needs to be patient.

The top five commands that every dog owner should teach are: come, down, stay, sit, and stand. “If you have the time and patience,” says Alvarez, “a dog can learn up to 700 words combined with an action.”

Another common misconception is that owners believe their dogs can read their minds. A dog does not

think like a human, it thinks like a wolf — a pack animal that looks to its leader for direction. Alvarez adds, “Don’t be mean to your dog, but mean what you say — many times, a dog’s life depends on it.”

Another important part of training, according to Alvarez, is being consistent and providing the appropriate reward. “Common mistakes that pet owners make,” explains Alvarez, “are that they don’t praise appropriately (make eye contact and provide verbal praise), praise too much, or don’t praise enough.” Another mistake is not following through. When a dog owner issues a verbal command, they must make sure that their pet obeys or responds to the command.

Choosing a Dog

Alvarez has advice for individuals or families that want to own a dog. “Look at all the different breeds and choose one that fits with your lifestyle. Never get a dog as a plaything for a child. Dogs are not toys — they are living creatures that require care.”

“When choosing a puppy,” Alvarez adds, “always look for the one that comes up to you and makes a connection with you; avoid the shy one that sits alone in a corner.”

Dog-Training Classes

Alvarez teaches beginning and advanced training classes through the Los Altos Hills Parks and Recreation Department. Dog owners learn how to understand their dog, proper way to give commands, how to be patient, and learn how to be a proper leader for their pet. “Some students and their pets have been with me for more than 7 years,” says Alvarez, “They are always learning new things, and so am I.”

For more information or to register visit www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/parks-and-recreation/activity-guide or call 650-947-2518.



COLORFUL CUBA



The exhibit, "Capturing Light: The World as We See It," will be on display at Town Hall from March 10 to August 28. The exhibit features the work of Palo Alto Camera Club (PACC) photographers Mansur Kiadeh, Jennifer Fraser, Kristina Johnson, David Coleman, Bill Jackson, Stan Chism, Susan Diederichsen, and Charles Anselmo. The photographers have traveled to Havana, Cuba as part of the Cuba Photography Field Workshops led by Anselmo.

Residents are invited to attend the reception on March 30 from 2:00 to 5:00 pm at Town Hall. On May 9, Residents will have an opportunity to hear Anselmo conduct a "Walk and Tour" of the photographic exhibit from 10:00 am to noon.

North Americans who know Cuba only from Hollywood movies and familiarity with Cuban artists are guilty of the oxymoron of mainland insularity, a product of Cold War tensions that have lingered due to political inertia for over 30 years. It is possible, however, to travel to that nominally Communist state, a tourist destination in pre-revolutionary times (and post-revolutionary). Redwood City photographer Charles Anselmo has made three dozen trips to Cuba over the past 14 years, cultivating friendships there, and leading small

groups of American artists and photographers on one-week photo workshops.

The exhibit will display a stunning variety of color photographs made by workshop participants who have traveled to Cuba over the course of the last three years. Cuba's resilient, photogenic people; famous hybridized old American cars; and stunning colonial architecture—all possible tourist-art clichés—are depicted here with sensitivity and visual sophistication.

Anselmo is mesmerized by Cuba, having made it the subject of many of his exhibits. "Initially I traveled to Havana for images, essentially because of the architecture slowly deconstructing itself," elaborates Anselmo, "but right away I was simply overwhelmed by the social ferment: the people, the faces, and most particularly, the extraordinary stories residing just under the granular multi-colored surfaces. The human imprint, its history, is really everywhere in the texture of the capital."

Over the years, Anselmo has developed many collaborative relationships with Havana arts organizations. He conducts numerous photography field workshops to Cuba, and speaks regularly as visiting lecturer at three Cuban art institutions. Anselmo has curated six U.S. exhibits of images by established Cuban photographers.

Los Altos Hills provides habitat for seven owl species: great horned, barn, western screech, long-eared, northern saw-whet, burrowing, and northern pygmy owls. This article will focus on the first three species that are typically seen and heard in town.

The Great Horned Owl

The great horned owl subspecies that occurs here, *Bubo virginianus pacificus*, is similar in size to a red-tailed hawk. Measuring 22 inches high with a four-foot wing span, its body is bulky, and its face is broad, with feather tufts that resemble ears or horns. The back is gray, the underside is striped white and gray, and the face can be tawny. It makes a deep muffled hooting sound: hoo hoodoo hoooo hoo, but its calls also include barks and screeches.

The great horned owl lives in woodland. It hunts at dusk, night, and dawn for rodents, rabbits, skunks, and birds. It can kill prey twice its size. It fiercely defends a territory of about 2.5-square miles, and will kill other owls in the process.

The great horned owl roosts in densely leaved trees, and nests in an old hawk or crow nest or sometimes a tree cavity. It mates for life and the nest sites are perennial: the pair returns each year to the same site to raise their brood. The nest is typically in a tree 15 to 70 feet above ground – usually 30 to 50 feet. Occasionally they will use a nest box. They nest early in the year (January-April), and lay two to three eggs. Both parents will incubate the eggs. The hatchlings are helpless fluff balls that can fly after two to three months, but are fed by the parents for several months. They start breeding after two years. There is one brood per year, and similar to many mammal-hunting birds, the loss of a perennial nest site can significantly impact population levels by reducing successful reproduction.

FUN FACTS

The barn owl will lower its head and sway it side to side when uneasy.

Female owls are larger than male owls.

The great horned owl has a poor sense of smell, which may be why it can eat skunks.

The great horned owl's eyes are human-sized.

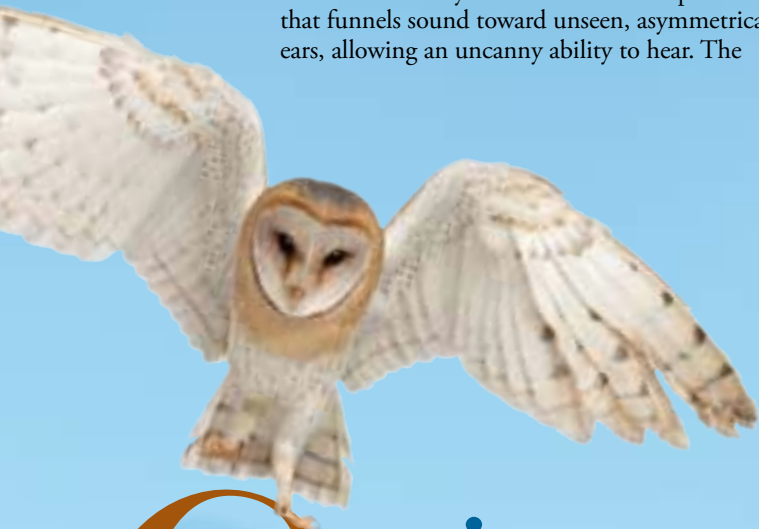
Despite their size, owls have light bodies and don't have to flap their wings much; this allows silent flight.

Owls are generally solitary; however, a group of owls is called a parliament.



The Barn Owl

The barn owl (*Tyto alba*), is about 12-18 inches tall and has an almost four-foot wingspan. It is a white and tawny owl with a heart-shaped face that funnels sound toward unseen, asymmetrical ears, allowing an uncanny ability to hear. The



Owise Owls

barn owl makes harsh, raspy screeches, hisses, and metallic clicking sounds, and does not typically hoot.

This owl exists on every continent except Antarctica and is a year-round resident of California. It roosts in cliffs, hollow trees, barns, unoccupied buildings, mine shafts, caves, bridges, dense tree groves, and riverbanks near open fields.

The barn owl is monogamous and nests at all times of the year. It does not build a nest, but finds a secluded cavity in a tree, building or nest box, lays eggs in the cavity, without requiring twigs, and raises 3-11 chicks that fledge within two months. The male feeds the incubating female and both parents raise the chicks.

The barn owl leaves its roost or nest at sunset and circles it in flight before heading off to hunt, strictly at night. It requires open areas for hunting. The barn owl eats insects, rodents, snakes, lizards, fish, and frogs. It also fiercely defends its territory, but usually loses the battle if a horned owl is involved.

The feathers on the tip of the barn owl's wing are structured to allow wind to flow through so the bird can catch prey in utter silence. Its keen ability to hear allows it to locate and capture

prey in the dark by sound alone. In addition to the asymmetrical ears, there is a specialized region of the barn owl brain devoted to hearing. Intimate knowledge of its habitat also helps, and major habitat changes can affect the barn owl's ability to hunt successfully.

Western Screech Owl

The western screech owl (*Megascops kennicottii*) is small and stocky with a large head. It is about eight inches tall and has a wingspan of one to two feet. It is brown or gray. It eats spiders, amphibians, reptiles, and fish, and hunts open areas soon after dusk, never far from trees.

This owl is a nocturnal, secretive bird that inhabits oak woodland, scrub, orchards, or broad-leaved evergreen forest where tree or stump cavities are available. It will use artificial nest boxes. It does not build a nest, but just lays and incubates the eggs on debris in the cavity, similar to the barn owl.

Although the western screech owl is common in town, it is rarely observed. The adult is detected by its call, a series of short, accelerating whistles (pwep pwep pwep pweppwepwep-pweppwep) from December through February.

This owl is monogamous and raises two to four chicks per year. The male feeds the female during incubation, as she is a close sitter. They roost together in the nest during the day. The eggs hatch in three to four weeks and are fed by both parents for another month.



Owl Conservation

Owls eat rodents, and many residents who are plagued by gophers wish there were more owls. Replacing an existing nest site with a nest box may not always succeed — the owl might reject the nest box and will not necessarily create a new nest nearby. Owls tend to be very particular about their nests and their location.

Signs

Owls can be detected by their night sounds or by examining the ground under suspected nest sites or roosts. In general, owls swallow their prey whole; all but the fur and the bones of rodents and the outer skeleton of large insects are digested. The remains are regurgitated in a pellet, one per rodent, usually gray and about one inch long. The number of pellets roughly indicates the number of rodents eaten. The species of rodent caught can be determined by examining the bones in the pellets.

Taylor Vanderlip is an environmental consultant specializing in biological issues.

SAFETY

The Town of Los Altos Hills partnered with the Los Altos County Fire District to develop the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to train residents to be prepared for a disaster. Since 2008, 205 residents have graduated from the CERT program. Dave Evans is one of those graduates. He and his wife, Sunny, and their two children have lived in Los Altos Hills for 13 years. Evans is Chief Futurist for Cisco. He recently shared his experience with the CERT program.



How did you find out about the CERT course?

I took the PEP class (personal emergency preparedness) and learned about CERT. I've always been interested in safety, first aid, and disaster preparedness, so I signed up immediately. I thoroughly enjoyed it. My wife and older son have also taken it, as well as a number of my neighbors.

What was the schedule for the course and who were your classmates?

The course went for a few weeks, each class lasted 3.5 hours during the evening, and there were some weekend sessions, so it was very convenient. The class had about 25 students, generally older people, many of whom were parents or retired.

Who was the instructor?

Mike Sanders. He is the backbone of our CERT program. He made the course very

SAVING LIVES WITH CERT

AN INTERVIEW WITH A GRADUATE

interesting. As a retired fire captain, he has real world experience in these areas, so we were not being taught by someone with theoretical knowledge, but first-hand, with years of experience — that makes a big difference. He's also very genuine, funny, and passionate about what he does.

What sort of things do you learn as part of emergency preparedness training?

It was quite comprehensive, but some of the things included: first aid, CPR, light search and rescue, cribbing (how to lift heavy objects off of someone), disaster psychology, electrical and fire hazards, animal rescue, and general safety preparedness.

What were five key lessons from the class?

1. Emergencies are going to happen. Be prepared.
2. You are more capable than you know.
3. Anyone, regardless of age, strength, can make a difference.
4. You live in a neighborhood, be there for your neighbors.
5. There is always something more to learn.

Are there lessons that apply to everyday life?

Sure — a few months ago, I was in a New York restaurant. A man collapsed near my

table and went into cardiac arrest. And a few weeks ago during a flight, a woman collapsed in the aisle next to my seat. In both cases a doctor was present, but it was good to know that I could have jumped in to help if needed.

What are common myths about disasters/emergency situations?

That you can't do anything; that only professionals can help. Not true. Everyone can help.

Californians are often accused of living in denial of the "Big One" (the severe earthquake that scientists predict will strike California within the next three decades). What do you think?

Very true. Most people are not prepared. If the Big One strikes everyone should be prepared to be self-sufficient for two weeks, with no electricity, no open stores, no running water. Taking a position of "it's not going to happen" is naive. One does not have to be paranoid, just be prepared. It may not even be an earthquake, there are plenty of reasons to be prepared.

Some residents may say: "CERT seems great but I don't have time," or "There are enough CERT members." What is your response?

If everyone had that attitude, we would have no CERT. A small investment of time now could save a life tomorrow, and if nothing else you meet great people, learn some great skills, and make a difference.

To learn more or register for a CERT class, contact Mike Sanders at mike.sanders@cnt.sccgov.org or 650-922-1055. The next CERT class begins on March 12.

RUN FOR THE HILLS

The 13th Annual Pathways Run/Walk will be held at Westwind Community Barn on Saturday, May 10. This year's event theme is "Start Tracking!" which celebrates the diverse two- and four-legged users of the town's pathway system. The public is invited to track footprints (mountain lions, to snakes, California quail, barefoot runners, equestrians, foxes, and lost hikers) while running or walking the scenic pathways with family and friends. The event features a 5K and 10K Pathways Run/Walk that begins at 9:00 am. The fee for this event is \$35, or \$40 on the day of the race; group registrations of 10 or more are \$25 per person. A less taxing 1-Mile Fun Run will begin at 10:30. The fee for this event is \$20, or \$25 on the day of the event. All pre-registered participants will receive a tracking guide shirt. To register, donate, volunteer or for more information contact Sarah Gualtieri 650-947-2518, sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov or visit the event website at www.lahpathwaysrun.org.

LOS ALTOS HILLS PATHWAYS RUN/WALK 2014 TRACKING GUIDE



On April 19, Hidden Villa will be hosting a new community event called the Duveneck Dash, an inspirational, recreational run/walk that invites residents of all ages to learn more about Hidden Villa, engage in hands-on activities, and support Hidden Villa's Summer Camp Scholarship fund.

From the smallest explorers in the toddler activity area to outdoor enthusiasts traversing the trail system, everyone will have the opportunity to have some healthy, outdoor fun. Participants will be able to explore diverse ecosystems and breathtaking views as they travel along the creek and summit local peaks. The run/walk will feature 5k and 10k loops with interactive stops along the way, engaging participants in learning about the local area's land, history, and culture along with Hidden Villa's core programs.

Proceeds from the event will help bring youth from low-income families to Hidden Villa's summer camp programs. With the support of these scholarships, a diverse group of about 1,300 youth will gather at Hidden Villa during the summer of 2014 to experience programs that inspire leadership for social and environmental justice and cultivate an appreciation for natural and human beauty.

Most importantly, the run/walk is a fun and engaging opportunity for friends and families to spend time together in nature, as well as appreciate the space that the Duvenecks left as a vital community resource for current and future generations to enjoy.

For more information, please visit the Hidden Villa website at www.hiddenvilla.org.

THE DUVENECK DASH



By the time you finish reading this article, at least six people will have had a stroke and at least one person will have died from a stroke. Stroke can affect anyone at any time, including older adults, middle-aged adults, children, and even newborns; women are at far greater risk than men. It's one of the leading causes of disability and death among Americans and can take a financial and emotional toll on the victim and their family.

THINK FAST AND HELP SAVE A BRAIN

"Stroke symptoms can occur very suddenly and many times, patients wait to see if the symptoms improve, which can often have fatal consequences," said Dr. Peter Fung, a neurologist at El Camino Hospital and stroke specialist. "The best thing a patient or their loved one can do when they see or experience the most common signs of stroke is to call 911 immediately. Time lost is brain lost."

An easy way to remember the signs and symptoms of stroke is the mnemonic F.A.S.T.:

F – Facial drooping, usually to one side

A – Arm weakness or numbness on one side of the body

S – Speech difficulty or slurring of words

T – Time to call 911

Santa Clara Emergency Medical Services has a well-developed system that can bring a stroke victim to the right facility for evaluation and treatment. Local hospitals, like El Camino Hospital, provide comprehensive evaluation and access to the latest stroke treatments, including intravenous or intra-arterial tPA (a clot-dissolving medication), thrombectomy, antiplatelet medications, and others that are designed to limit or reverse the stroke deficits. They also offer programs to reduce the chance of stroke worsening and recurrence.

Recently, the hospital, in collaboration with the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, expanded its Neuroscience Institute to offer the latest treatments — many of which are less invasive — for not only stroke, but also other brain and spine-related diseases like aneurysm and cancer.

According to Dr. Thomas Wolfe, a neurologist with the Palo Alto Medical Foundation who is providing medical leadership for the new neurointerventional services at El Camino Hospital, the expansion of this program, "helps us meet the growing needs of our community, where we have seen an increase in patients at risk for stroke and other brain diseases. The experienced physicians at both organizations, along with advanced imaging technology and continuum of services offered by El Camino Hospital, are the same caliber as those found at top medical centers, but with the added benefit of being available right here in our community."



To learn more about the neurointerventional program at El Camino Hospital, please visit www.elcaminohospital.org. Visit www.heart.org to learn more about the signs of stroke.

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Local public schools from kindergarten through high school joined over 10 million students across the nation for the Hour of Code during Computer Science Education Week in December 2013. When programming computers, students develop critical thinking skills applicable to problem solving in all aspects of life. The Hour of Code aims to increase the ubiquity of computer science instruction. Fortunately for Los Altos Hills students, our public schools are among the few currently teaching computer science. The Hour of Code was a popular event among elementary schools as it exposed students to more of what is available.

“At Lucille Nixon Elementary School, we couldn’t contain ourselves and decided to start one week early. We wanted to make sure that every student, from Kindergarten to fifth grade, got to complete the whole hour by December 15. It was very exciting to be part of such an important, worldwide movement,” reported Computer Specialist, Sarah Patanroi. Younger grades used Kodable, an iPad app, that introduces programming concepts through games. First through fifth graders used a Blockly-based online visual programming editor. Upper grades also used Light-bot on iPads and computers to learn computing fundamentals through puzzles. Computational thinking, spatial reasoning, and logic were all part of the learning. From that week came the Nixon Nerds lunchtime program with kids from second to fifth grades choosing to code in the lab during recess.

At Bullis Charter School, the Hour of Code was embedded within classroom Project Based Learning (PBL) and Design Thinking units in all grade levels. Kindergarteners did an “off-line” hands-on activity. First and fifth graders worked on activities from code.org while second graders programmed LEGO WeDo robots as part of their Leatherback Sea Turtle PBL unit. Students programmed robots to tilt and display different scenes as the sea turtle swam through the water and crawled onto the beach. “Our students have always been

enthusiastic about computer science,” said Lynn Reed, MakerSpace Director. “the Hour of Code was a great opportunity for us to be involved in a larger movement that highlights the importance of preparing all children with skills they will need to thrive in the 21st century.”

Each student at Gardner Bullis participated in a computational thinking/coding lesson with additional activities during Lunch Club coordinated by LASD STEM Specialist Amy Shelley. Kindergarteners and first graders built mazes with blocks and programmed Bee-Bots and the Bee-Bot iPad app to make the robots navigate the maze. Using the Daisy the Dinosaur and Hopscotch apps, second graders did drag-and-drop visual programming. Third, fourth and fifth graders used MIT’s Scratch to program games on laptops. Of the experience, Amy Shelley said, “Kids who may not be excited about school found a niche. Now I see them all the time during Lunch Club exploring Scratch, playing their games, sharing coding samples, and some working in groups.”

By integrating computer science into the curriculum, our elementary schools expose every Los Altos Hills student to design, logical reasoning, and general

Top: Fifth graders at Bullis Charter try out their coding skills with an activity from code.org. Right: First grader at Gardner Bullis builds a maze with blocks for the Bee-Bot robot.

BEYOND THE HOUR OF CODE: EXAMPLES OF COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION

Elementary (K-5)

Local schools start teaching the concepts of logic in kindergarten and first grade using hands-on activities and touch apps like Kodable and Bee-Bots. LEGO WeDo is used for robotics projects with some schools using MIT’s Makey Makey to build and program robots starting in fourth grade. Once students are proficient with keyboarding, Tynker, Logo, and MIT’s Scratch are used to learn visual programming.

Middle School (6-8)

Sixth graders in LASD schools learn computer programming in Arduino with a yearly C-STEM competition and the junior highs offer a robotics elective. Students at BCS learn to code in JavaScript as a precursor to their App Design unit, where each student pitches their app to a panel of entrepreneurs. PAUSD schools offer elective computer science courses in Java with optional AP credit.

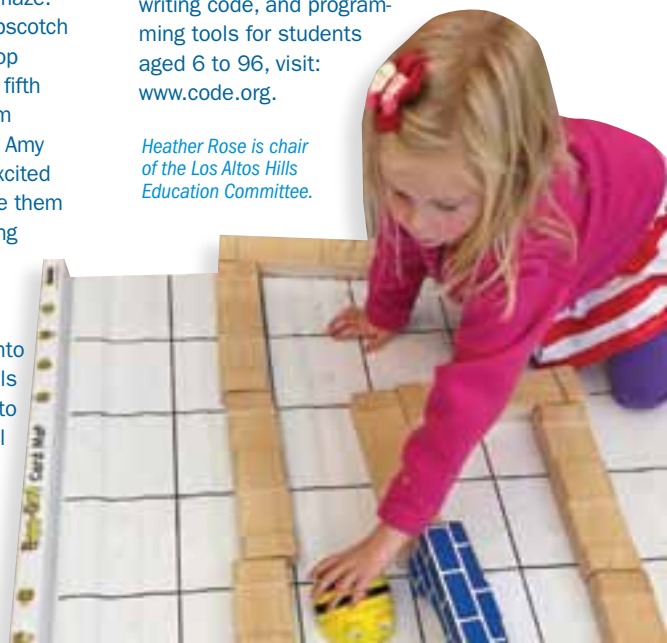
High School (9-12)

Both districts, PAUSD and MVLA, offer the Computer Science AP course in Java. This AP course is considered a stepping-stone to further computer science study. Mobile app design occurs at all the high schools.

problem-solving skills. Studying computer programming enables our students to create and adapt new technologies. These skills are much more than computer literacy, which is the ability to use computers and their applications. For example, Google Docs, Sketch-Up, iMovie, and PowerPoint are all popular applications used by students. Local public schools go far beyond one hour of coding to provide our students with the ability to not only use technology, but also shape that technology to new uses.

To learn more about computer science, writing code, and programming tools for students aged 6 to 96, visit: www.code.org.

Heather Rose is chair of the Los Altos Hills Education Committee.



MICHAEL JOHNSON

Five years ago, Los Altos Hills resident Michael Johnson, age 18, was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis (CF). Doctors delivered a grim prognosis: he could never be an athlete. Undaunted, Johnson overcame the limitations of his medical condition through hard work and dedication. He is now a well-rounded athlete who runs, swims, lifts weights, and plays basketball. His journey is remarkable as well as inspirational.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I was born here in the Bay Area and was primarily raised in Los Altos. Our family moved to Los Altos Hills when I was nine years old. My dad is a businessman for a tech company and my mom teaches piano. I have two sisters and a brother. I attended Covington Elementary, Egan Junior High, and Los Altos High School. I am currently at Brigham Young University in Provo.

When did you discover you had a medical condition and what was your initial reaction?

I didn't find out until my freshman year of high school. My younger brother was diagnosed with CF first, and my diagnosis quickly followed. CF is a chronic genetic disease that progressively damages the lungs and digestive system. At first, I didn't fully understand the effect CF would have on my life. I thought it was something that would occasionally require an extra shot at the doctor's visit each year. I didn't realize that this disease was going to impact my life. When I finally understood the extent to which it was going to affect me, I was a little overwhelmed. I didn't want to have to change my routine. Although it was a lot to take in, I remained positive and hopeful.

What sort of prognosis did the doctors provide?

The doctors told me that I was very healthy for someone with CF. They predicted that this disease, while it would get progressively worse, would be something I could manage through healthy eating, exercise, and medication.

What inspired you to embrace athleticism wholeheartedly?

Even before I knew I had CF, I was playing sports almost every day. It was

this love for sports that initially drove me to exercise and be healthy. My dad has always been good at exercising consistently, so I saw exercise as a normal aspect of life. It also helps that I am fairly self-motivated. When I see an aspect of myself that I can improve — which happens all too often — I immediately start working on that.

What is your favorite sport or exercise?

My favorite sport is basketball. I enjoy playing pick-up games with my friends and my dad. In addition to that, I just enjoy running. There is no better way to clear your mind than to spend an afternoon jogging through the hills.



What advice have your parents given you that has been very valuable?

I cannot think of a specific piece of advice, but I do know this: They have taught me to do my best. Somehow, little by little, they have inspired me to be self-motivated and disciplined.

How did you learn about the diet and exercise regimen that would work best?

My dad taught me the basics of exercise, and I have gone from there. Since then I have been creating my own workout routines, based on exercises that I find online or through sports practices.

How is your health now? What do the doctors say about your progress?

I am still very healthy. My exercise, coupled with my daily lung treatments, has allowed for this to happen. My lung capacity is 20% better than a healthy person's lung capacity. I am also very fortunate that my specific mutation

seems to be less severe than the typical CF patient.

You recently won first place in the "GNC Respect Yourself" video contest. How did you learn about it?

I was online looking at video contests, and I came across the "GNC Respect Yourself" competition. It immediately sparked my interest. You can see the video here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCqcyRjBIQ.

Who helped you with the video?

I wrote the script and my brother-in-law shot and helped edit the video.

Tell us about when you learned that you won the contest?

I was in one of my classes checking my email. When I looked in my "spam" folder, I saw the email that said I had won. I immediately began to shake with excitement. Needless to say, I didn't remember a single thing that the teacher said that day.

How has winning the contest impacted your life?

Winning the contest was very exciting for me. I was one of two top prizewinners, each receiving \$25,000. That prize will help me pay for my future education. Since the video was posted, many people have come up to me and told me that they thought the message was inspiring. I'm glad that this video made a difference in some people's lives.

In the video you state that if you had the power to change your medical condition, you wouldn't. Please elaborate.

I believe that I was given this medical challenge for a reason. I think that it has helped me develop a deeper feeling of gratitude for my health. It has also given me the opportunity to help and inspire others as well.

Any advice for young people?

For those with CF, my main advice is to keep going. No matter how hard it seems right now, the future can always be brighter than the past. For those who are addicted to digital devices: stop playing "Angry Birds" and start playing tag! Do anything that gets you off the couch and outside into the real world.



TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
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Town Newsletter Statement of Purpose

This is the official town newsletter to communicate current issues, services, and activities in Los Altos Hills to the residents of the town — to facilitate, encourage, and improve interaction between the residents and the town government. The newsletter is published quarterly. **Deadline for the next issue is April 1, 2014.**

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www.losaltoshills.ca.gov

Our Town

Our Town is published with assistance from the City Clerk, Deborah Padovan, and Town Volunteer Committees.

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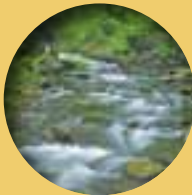
Carl Cahill

CALENDAR

March 2

Sun, 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Creekside Neighbors' Workshop

Learn about history, benefits, and challenges of living with our creeks. Contact Kit Gordon kitgordon@me.com for more details.



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Sun, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Leadership Conference
Open to high school and middle school students and hosted by the LAH Youth Commission at Hidden Villa's Dana Center. For more information contact sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov.



April 19

Sat, 9:00 am
11th Annual Hoppin' Hounds Easter Biscuit Hunt

Bring your dog to Byrne Preserve for an on-leash biscuit hunt benefiting Palo Alto Animal Services shelter. A \$5 donation is requested. Call 650-947-2518 for more information.

Sat, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Easter Egg Hunt

Get your Easter basket ready for a friendly hunt at Purissima Park. This is a perfect opportunity to socialize with your neighbors. Bring a picnic lunch and your own hard-boiled eggs.

Visit www.lahfamily.com for more information.

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Thu, 10:00 am - Noon
Walk and Talk

Photographer and Cuba expert Charles Anselmo discusses the award-winning photographs featured in the exhibit, "Capturing Light."

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Sun, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Earth Day Celebration
Farmers market, electric vehicle car show, wild cats and reptiles, and more. Due to cat presentation, no dogs allowed. To learn more, contact 650-947-2518 or sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov.



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Sun, 2:00 - 5:00 pm
Reception for "Capturing Light" a photographic exhibit

Art Reception at Town Hall, featuring live music with the youngsters from the Peninsula Youth Theater.



May 10

Sat, 9:00 am
13th Annual Pathways Run/Walk - Start Tracking!

5K, 10K, and 1 Mile fun run. For more information visit the event website at www.lahpathwaysrun.org.

Calendar events are also posted on Town's website: www.losaltoshills.ca.gov